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PAGE 01 BANGKO 07604 01 OF 02 191441Z

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ACTION EA AQT

INFO OCT APQ PM-05 NSC-10 SS-20 RSC-01 H-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 P-03 USIA-12 PRS-01 RSR-01 /078 W

05 1137

P R 191208Z JUN 70
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY YIRY
INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 7604

SUBJ: SYMINGTON LETTER

REF: STATE 092833

1. SYMINGTON'S LETTER IS PREDICATED ON ASSUMPTION THAT THERE ARE THAI FORCES IN CAMBODIA. THERE ARE OF COURSE NONE, EXCEPTING THE SMALL THAI LIAISON GROUP IN PHNOM PENH UNDER GEN SA-ATH (CURRENTLY ABOUT 5-10 PEOPLE), WHICH DOES NOT IN ANY WAY CONSTITUTE "FORCES" WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE LETTER. ACCORDINGLY, BELIEVE IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO RESPOND TO SYMINGTON BY KEYING HYPOTHETICAL ANSWERS TO HIS NUMBERED QUESTIONS. RATHER, SUGGEST MORE GENERAL RESPONSE FOR WHICH SOME RAW MATERIAL PROVIDED PARA 2 BELOW, WITH FOCUS ON THAI CONCERNS FOR DETERIORATING SITUATION IN CAMBODIA AS PRINCIPAL MOTIVATION BEHIND THAI ASSISTANCE EFFORTS OF ALL TYPES. THIS WOULD PROVIDE BACKGROUND FOR RESPONDING TO FURTHER SENATORIAL INQUIRIES THAT MUST BE ANTICIPATED IF AND WHEN RTG MAKES DECISION TO DEPLOY THAI TROOPS M

2. BEFORE GOING ANY FARTHER, HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER MY PROFOUND CONCERN AT THIS WHOLE PROCESS. THE SUBCOMMITTEE WILL NOT RESPECT OUR REQUEST TO KEEP CERTAIN INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL AND WE WILL FIND OURSELVES INVOLVED IN ANOTHER PUBLIC CATIGATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND OF THE THAIS. ALL THIS BECAUSE THEY ARE TRYING TO GIVE MILITARY HELP TO A NEIGHBOR IN VIEW OF THE GRAVE SECURITY THREAT TO THEM IF HE GOES UNDER, AND BECAUSE WE ARE TRYING

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 07604 01 OF 02 191441Z
TO HELP THE THAIS TO DO THIS WITHOUT SERIOUS DETRIMENT TO
THEIR OWN ECONOMY AND STATE OF EQUIPMENT. THIS IS A MATTER
IN WHICH WE HAVE CONSIDERABLE INTEREST AND OUR HELP IS
SURELY DIRECTLY IN THE SPIRIT OF THE NIXON DOCTRINE. THE
THAIS WANT OUR HELP BUT ARE BEGINNING TO CONCLUDE THAT
IT'S ALMOST NOT WORTH BEING MADE A FOOTBALL IN US
INTERNAL POLITICS (SEE PRESS AND OTHER COMMENT, BANGKOK 7203).
I AM WARY OF SAYING THAT WE KNOW OF NO THAI FORCES IN
CAMBODIA; THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN CAREFULLY AVOIDING
GIVING POSITIVE RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION AND WHY SHOULD WE?
IF THEY PUT FORCES IN LATER BUT DON'T WANT IT DISCUSSED,
WOULD WE NOT BE OBLIGED NEVERTHELESS TO GO BACK TO THE
SUBCOMMITTEE AND TELL THEM, AND READ IT IN THE NEWSPAPERS
THE NEXT DAY B THESE ARE NOT EASY QUESTIONS I AM RAISING
BUT I CANNOT HONESTLY ADDRESS THIS MATTER OTHERWISE; WE
MAY BE HEADING FOR A MAJOR BLOW AUP WITH THAILAND IF WE DO
NOT HANDLE THIS MATTER MOST CIRCUMSPECTLY.

3. SUGGEST REPLY ALONG FOLLOWING LINES C

KA) WITH RESPECT TO THE QUESTIONS POSED IN YOUR LETTER
OF JUNE 3, THERE ARE NO THAI FORCES IN CAMBODIA. THERE HAVE
BEEN NO FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE THAI GOVERNMENT ON
WHAT SUPPORT WE MIGHT PROVIDE FOR THE SENDING SUCH
FORCES INTO CAMBODIA, NOR HAVE THERE BEEN ANY US-CAMBODIAN
NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS MATTER. AS IS CUSTOMARY AND FITTING
AMONG ALLIES, THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IN CLOSE
CONSULTATION WITH US ABOUT THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA
WHICH HAS HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE THAI PEOPLE AND
GOVERNMENT. THE UNCONCEALED AGGRESSION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE
AND VIET CONG FORCES AGAINST CAMBODIA AND THEIR ATTACKS
IN FORCE AGAINST UNITS OF THE CAMBODIAN ARMY DEFENDING
THEIR HOMELAND, AS WELL AS THEIR HOSTILE MOVEMENTS IN AREAS
PROXIMATE TO THE BORDERS OF THAILAND, HAVE CAUSED THE THAI
GOVERNMENT, THE LEGISLATURE AND THE PRESS TO GIVE SERIOUS
THOUGHT TO WHAT ASSISTANCE THAILAND WOULD BE IN THE BEST
POSITION TO RENDER CONSISTENT WITH ITS CAPABILITIES AND
SECURITY INTERESTS.

(B) THAILAND HAS ALSO RECEIVED URGENT APPEALS FOR
HELP FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA, WITH WHICH THE THAI
GOVERNMENT HAS ESTABLISHED FRIENDLY RELATIONS. AS YOU
KNOW, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VIET CONG FORCES

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 07604 01 OF 02 191441Z
HAD GROSSLY VIOLATED THE NEUTRALITY OF CAMBODIA EVER SINCE
THEY BUILT UP A MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE AREAS
BORDERING ON VIET-NAM WHERE FOR YEARS THEY HAVE ENJOYED
A PRIVILEGED SANCTUARY. THEIR ADVANCE TOWARD THE CAPITAL
OF PHNOM PENH AND TOWARD THE BORDERS OF THAILAND WAS, OF
COURSE, OF GREAT CONCERN TO THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT
WHICH ON APRIL 14 MADE A WORLDWIDE APPEAL FOR ALL "UNCON-
DITIONAL" FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. SUBSEQUENTLY, SEVERAL NATIONS,

INCLUDING JAPAN, INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD EXTEND ASSISTANCE
IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER TO CAMBODIA. THE CAMBODIAN
GOVERNMENT APPEALED EVEN MORE SPECIFICALLY TO ITS IMMEDIATE
NEIGHBORS, THAILAND THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM, FOR
MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE HAVE BEEN
FREQUENT CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE CAMBODIAN AND THAI
AND CAMBODIA AND VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENTISM GP-3
UNGER

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 07604 02 OF 02 191519Z

42

ACTION EA-15

INFO OCT-01 PM-05 NSC-10 SS-20 RSC-01 H-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 P-03 USIA-12 PRS-01 RSR-01 /078 W

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P R 191208Z JUN 70

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6847

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

SECRET SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 7604

(C) IN VIEW OF ITS LIMITED ECONOMIC RESOURCES AND THE CONSIDERABLE CONTRIBUTION THAILAND IS ALREADY MAKING TO THE WAR IN VIET-NAM, AS WELL AS IN MEETING ITS OWN INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEM, THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS EXPLORED WITH US POSSIBILITIES OF US SUPPORT IN CONNECTION WITH SUCH MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS THAILAND MIGHT EXTEND TO CAMBODIA. HOWEVER, NO DECISIONS ON EITHER THE THAI OR THE US SIDE HAVE BEEN MADE. FOR THESE REASONS, I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO RESPOND SPECIFICALLY WITH RESPECT TO QUESTIONS 1, 2 AND 3.

(D) WITH RESPECT TO QUESTION 4, THE THAI, RESPONDING TO APPEALS FROM THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT FOR EQUIPMENT FOR THE CAMBODIAN FORCES, HAVE MADE AVAILABLE AS AN INITIAL EFFORT A NUMBER OF BASIC ITEMS, SOME OF WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN DELIVERED TO CAMBODIA OR ARE ABOUT TO BE SHIPPED SHORTLY. THESE INCLUDE UNIFORMS, CANTEENS, RAINCOATS, RICE POTS, MOSQUITO NETS, ETC., FOR 50,000 MEN. THEY HAVE ALSO OFFERED 20 SMALL RIVER PATROL BOATS FOR SURVEILLANCE DUTIES ON THE RIVERS IN CAMBODIA WHICH, PARTICULARLY NOW IN THE RAINY SEASON, ARE THE MAIN ARTERIES OF NORTH VIETNAMESE INFILTRATION AND RESUPPLY. THE THAI HAVE ALSO OFFERED TO TRAIN CAMBODIAN AIR FORCE PILOTS AND TO TRAIN CAMBODIAN GROUND COMBAT FORCES. FURTHERMORE, THEY HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO MOVE TO THAILAND, IN THAI AIR FORCE TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, SOME T-28 AIRCRAFT OF THE CAMBODIAN AIR FORCE REQUIRING OVER HAUL. THIS ASSISTANCE COMES ENTIRELY FROM THAI RESOURCES WITHOUT ANY REIMBURSEMENT ON OUR PART. I DO NOT HAVE GOOD ESTIMATES ON THE DOLLAR VALUE OF THIS

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SECRET

PAGE 02 BANGKO 07604 02 OF 02 191519Z
ASSISTANCE. THE THAI

GARBLED PORTION

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO THE DEFENSE EFFORTS OF THE
CAMBODIAN FORCES.

(E) FOR THE REASONS ALREADY STATED ABOVE (WITH RESPECT TO QUESTIONS 1,2, AND 3) QUESTIONS 5, 6 AND 7 IN YOUR LETTER ALSO DO NOT APPLY; HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS THAT THE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT TO CAMBODIA ALREADY PLEDGED BY THE RTG AND ITS DECISION TO PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS TO SERVE IN CAMBODIA IS SUPPORTED BY A WIDE-RANGING CONSENSUS OF THE THAI PEOPLE, THE VAST MAJORITY OF WHOM RECOGNIZE THE DESIRABILITY AND NEED OF PROTECTING THE SECURITY OF THAILAND BY KEEPING HOSTILE FORCES FROM APPROACHING THAI FRONTIERS. THERE HAS BEEN UNIVERSAL WELCOME IN THAILAND FOR THE RESTORATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA AND THE THAI ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE PROSPECT OF RENEWED ECONOMIC AND OTHER RELATIONS. THE THAI HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT AND SEE IN THE SUPPORT IT RECEIVES FROM THE CAMBODIAN POPULATION A CLEAR INDICATION OF THE REJECTION BY THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE OF A POLICY OF PERMITTING THE MAINTENANCE OF LARGE NORTH VIETNAMESE BASE AREAS AND SUPPLY ROUTES ON CAMBODIAN SOIL. SUCH ASSISTANCE AS THE THAI GOVERNMENT MAY EXTEND WILL BE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR DESIRE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SECURITY OF THEIR OWN COUNTRY AND TO SUPPORT A FRIENDLY COUNTRY WHICH OCCUPIES A CRUCIAL POSITION AS A NEIGHBOR OF THAILAND, LAOS AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, AND WHOSE MAINTENANCE AS AN INDEPENDENT NEUTRAL STATE FREED OF THE PRESENCE OF A NORTH VIETNAMESE/VIET CONG ARMY, WOULD BE A MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN PROMOTING COMMON OBJECTIVES IN SOUTH VIETNAM, INCLUDING THE SUCCESS OF THE VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM.

4. STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT RESPONSE TO SYMINGTON GO FORWARD SOONEST TO REDUCE FURTHER PRESS QUERIES AND SPECULATIONS. REQUEST OPPORTUNITY COMMENT ON FINAL DRAFT SECRETARY'S LETTER BEFORE IT IS SENT. GP-3
UNGER

NOTE: OMISSION; CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 07604 SECRET
02 OF 02 191519Z

SECRET